SHARING
your
FAITH
STUDY GUIDE

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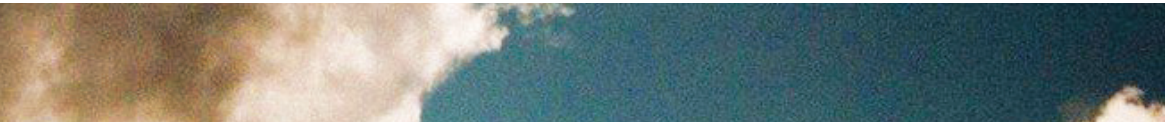


Leader's Guide:

This study guide is here to help you lead a fun and transformative eGroup study over the next few weeks that will see each person progress and grow.
Use this guide, along with the DVDs and weekly Study Guides, for a life-changing, interactive experience.

BEFORE YOU MEET:

Ask God to prepare the hearts and minds of the people in your eGroup. Ask Him to show each of you how to apply what you learn to your own heart to see growth and to move forward.
Preview the DVD and read through the study guide for that week. Think about what you might answer for each question. Make notes in your study guide if you want to.

SETTING UP:

Take time before everyone arrives to prepare some snacks to share with everyone, set up the room you will use, check that there are enough seats, and try to create a relaxed and comfortable environment to meet in. You might want to play music quietly to create a relaxed atmosphere when everyone arrives, or move the furniture in your living room to make the space inviting.
Have a Bible handy for verses that you might want to look up during discussion.

HOW TO HOST YOUR GATHERING AND USE YOUR STUDY GUIDE:

ENGAGE: Welcome each person as they arrive. Spend time chatting, getting to know one another, or just sharing about the week. Your relationships as a group are as important as the time you spend watching the DVD or in discussion. A relaxed and friendly environment is an easy place to learn and hear from God.

RECAP: After the first session you may wish to spend a bit of time each week recapping how your last seven days has been, inviting members to share any opportunities they had throughout the week to apply what they learned and how their individual activation went.

WATCH: After you have spent some time engaging with each other watch the DVD for the week.

DISCUSS: Read out each question in the study guide, allowing time for everyone to share their thoughts or experiences if they desire.

When a question arises, ask the group for their input, and resist the urge to answer it yourself straight away. Your primary role is to create an environment where people feel comfortable to be themselves and participate, not to provide all the answers to all of their questions. Don't be afraid of silence as participants think of their response to the questions.

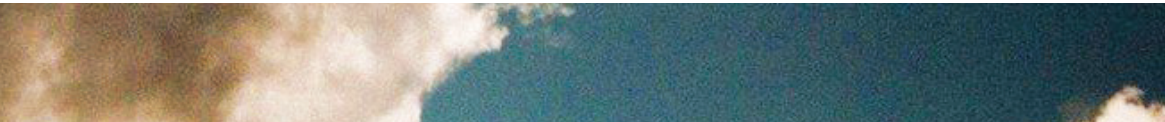
Remember, the goal is not necessarily to 'get through' all of the questions. The main priority is for each person to learn and engage in dynamic discussion.

PRAY: Ask the group to pray for each other from week to week, especially about key issues that arise during your discussion time. This is how you begin to build authentic relationship, and encourage spiritual growth within the group.

ACTIVATE: As a group, read out and talk about the action in the study guide for that week. Decide together to commit to doing this action during the week to help you each grow and engage with God individually.

SUGGESTED TIME FRAMES FOR YOUR GATHERING:

ENGAGE: 15 minutes
RECAP: 10 minutes
WATCH: 10 minutes
DISCUSS: 30 minutes
PRAY: 5-10 minutes
ACTIVATE: 5 minutes
(Please note that these are just suggested times, you may wish to take longer in certain areas. However, we do recommend keeping your gathering to a maximum of one and a half hours in consideration of others' time)



Keys to a dynamic eGroup

Relationships

Meaningful, encouraging relationships are the foundation of a dynamic eGroup. Discussion and prayer are important elements of a gathering, but the depth of each part is often dependent upon the depth of the relationships between members.

Availability

Building a sense of community within your group requires members to prioritise their relationships with one another. This means being available to listen, care for one another, and meet each other's needs.

Mutual Respect

Mutual respect is shown when members value others' opinions (even when they disagree) and are careful to never belittle or embarrass others in the group (including their spouses, who may or may not be present).

Openness

A healthy group environment encourages sincerity and transparency. Members treat each other with grace in areas of weakness, allowing each other room to grow.

Confidentiality

To develop authenticity and a sense of safety within the group, each member must be able to trust that things discussed within the group will not be shared outside the group.

Shared Responsibility

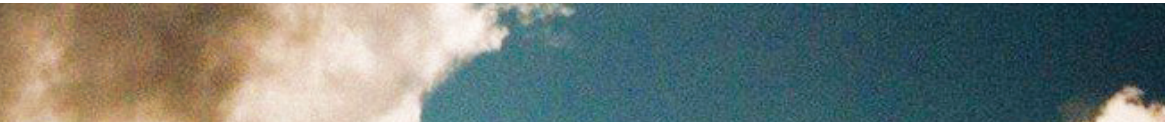
Group members will share the responsibility of gatherings by using their God-given abilities to serve at each meeting. Some may greet, some may prepare food, some may pray, etc. Ideally, each person should be available to care for one another as needed.

Sensitivity

Dynamic eGroups are born when the leader consistently seeks and is responsive to the guidance of the Holy Spirit, following His leading throughout the meeting as opposed to sticking to the "agenda". This is especially important during the discussion and prayer time.

Fun!

Dynamic gatherings take the time to have fun! Create an atmosphere for fun, and be willing to laugh at yourself every now and then!



Week One

ENGAGE: Spend time connecting with each other
WATCH: Watch Session One of the DVD
DISCUSS:
Key Verse: Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptising them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit [Matthew 28:19 NIV]

The reason we share our faith is so that people who are far from God can come to know Him and how much He loves them.
Question: Who's one person in your life who you're close to that you'd love to know God the way that you do?

The way we communicate with people is so important. It's important that love is our motivation for sharing our faith, not doing a task for God.
Question: Before you became a Christian, who shared their faith with you or told you about Jesus? What did they do that worked?

Question: Did they do anything that 'didn't work'?

We see in Matthew 28:19 (see key scripture) that Jesus wasn't just speaking to His disciples, He was speaking to all believers, when He said to 'go and make disciples.'
Question: Why is it so important that we share our faith with others?

Sharing your faith isn't just for pastors or for the TV evangelists - it's for everybody.
Question: Have you ever shared your faith in Jesus with someone? What happened?

Pastor Kathy shared how she was 'put off' from sharing her faith because of her experience as a teenager.
Question: Do you have any negative perceptions or experiences of sharing your faith that make you uncomfortable about sharing your faith with others?

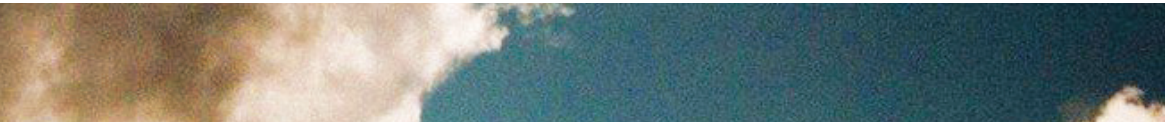
There are different types of evangelism. Some people use 'method-centred evangelism' to help them share their faith, others focus on 'message-centred evangelism.'
Question: What do you think works best for you when sharing your faith with others?

Jesus didn't give us this command and then expect us to do it alone. He helps us, and the Holy Spirit gives us new boldness and confidence when we share our faith.

Question: Have you ever experienced this confidence from God when telling someone about Jesus?

PRAY: Who's close to you but far from God? Pray together as a group that God would help you each share His love with them in some way this week.

ACTIVATE: What could you do to connect with that person and show them you love them? Put that into action this week and commit to praying for that person this week.



Week Two

ENGAGE: Spend time connecting with each other
RECAP: Are there any testimonies from last week's challenge to pray and share with someone who you know is far from God?
WATCH: Watch Session Two of the DVD
DISCUSS:
Key Verse: When I am with those who are weak, I share their weakness, for I want to bring the weak to Christ. Yes, I try to find common ground with everyone, doing everything I can to save some. [1 Corinthians 9:22 NLT]

Our worlds are already filled with people, but we may not realise that these are people who don't know Jesus the way we do.
Question: What are some of the environments that you are a part of in your day to day life where you're connecting with people who don't know Jesus?

1 Corinthians 10:23 says "...'I am allowed to do anything'—but not everything is beneficial."
There are a lot of things that we could get involved in, but not all of them will help us impact the lives of others with the love of Jesus.
Question: How do you decide what to get involved in and spend your time on? Is making room to share your faith one of your decision-making criteria?

Evangelism is not something you add into your existing life. We are the message, and the message of Jesus is central to our lives as believers.
Question: You are the message. What are some of the ways that the message of Jesus can naturally 'come out of our lives'?

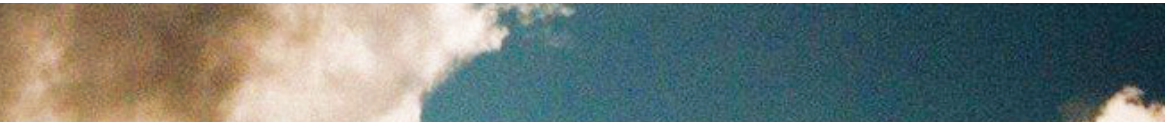
Being intentional with your actions and your words can create space for you to share your faith with another person.
Question: What are some intentional things that you do to help create opportunities to share your faith?

One of the tools mentioned in this week's session is to have leading conversations. Sometimes it's as simple as asking questions about others or if they'd like you to pray for them.
Question: What are some examples of leading questions you could ask in a conversation to open the discussion up more?

Other tools mentioned in this week's session that help make room to share your faith were to listen carefully to the other person while they're speaking, and to be aware of those around you.
Question: Why is it important that people know you value them before you share with them?

PRAY: Pray together that God would give you each compassion and love for those who don't know Him.

ACTIVATE: Continue to pray for someone who is close to you but far from God. Look for opportunities this week to engage in conversation with others, and be intentional about showing genuine love for them in your conversation.



Week Three

ENGAGE: Spend time connecting with each other
RECAP: What have you learned from the series so far? Have you been able to put anything into practice?
WATCH: Watch Session Three of the DVD
DISCUSS:
Key Verse: The Sovereign Lord has given me a well-instructed tongue, to know the word that sustains the weary. [Isaiah 50:4 NIV]

We've all been guilty of the 'miss and run'. We miss the opportunity where we could go deeper in a conversation (talking about attitudes, values, background, history etc) but choose not to.
Question: Have you had any 'miss and run' conversations this week? What happened?

We have all either witnessed or done a 'hit and run'. We're encouraged in an environment like church to share our faith, and we proceed to start a conversation with someone where we jump straight to personal beliefs.
Question: Have you ever done the 'hit and run' in a conversation? What happened?

'Hit the mark' is when we take the time to care, love and go through the layers of speaking about common interests, attitudes and values, and then leading into personal beliefs.
Question: Have you ever done 'hit the mark' in a conversation? What happened?

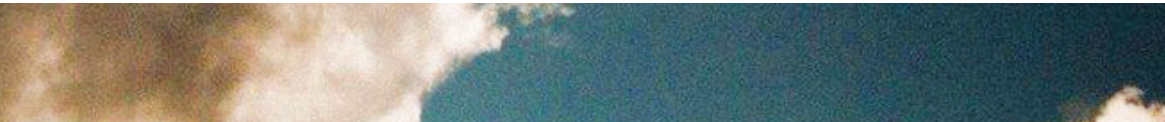
In the Bible we see that Jesus often sat and chatted with people over a meal. The power of chatting over a meal is that two worlds open up. Often when you 'open up' your world, others feel comfortable to open up theirs as well.
Question: What is it about opening up your home or sharing a meal with someone that makes them feel comfortable and cared for?

In this week's session the discussion mentions noticing when people are weary or downcast.
Question: What are some ways to effectively ask and help someone open up about their weariness?

Isaiah 50:4 says the Lord has given you a "well-instructed tongue". We can ask God and trust Him to give us the 'right words' in situations where we may not know what to say.
Question: Have you been in a situation where the Holy Spirit gave you the right words to speak? What happened?

PRAY: Pray for each other that God would give you the right words to speak in conversations this week.

ACTIVATE: Who could you invite for a meal and build a deeper relationship? Invite someone over this week and open up your world to them.



Week Four

ENGAGE: Spend time connecting with each other
RECAP: How are you feeling having prayed regularly for the one person you know who is close to you but far from God? Is your faith increasing for their salvation?
WATCH: Watch Session Four of the DVD
DISCUSS:
Key Verse: For I am not ashamed of the gospel, because it is the power of God that brings salvation to everyone who believes: first to the Jew, then to the Gentile. [Romans 1:16]

The word gospel means 'good news' but it also "challenges the hearts of man."
Question: Are we responsible for how a person responds when we share the gospel with them? Why do you think that?

Our testimony is the story of what Christ has done in our lives. When we share it, it makes the gospel message relatable; others can see the impact of Jesus in our life.
Question: Have you ever shared your testimony with someone? How did they respond when you shared it?

Our testimony prepares a person's heart, but when they hear the message of the gospel it brings a challenge to them to respond to the message for themselves.
Question: How do you feel about sharing the gospel with others? What works for you?

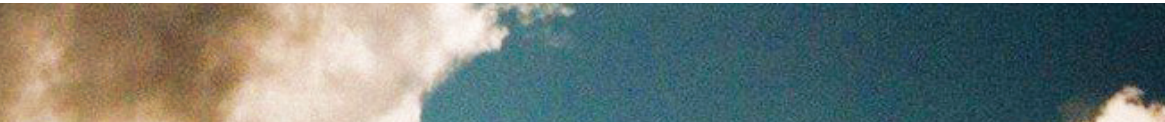
Question: Do you feel differently about sharing your testimony versus sharing the gospel with people?

The gospel is on a 'need to know basis' for everyone. Everyone needs to hear it.
Question: Is there anyone that you've assumed doesn't need to hear the gospel? Is there anyone you've 'ruled out' of sharing your faith with?

Honesty is a big thing when you're sharing your testimony.
Question: Why do you think honesty is important when you're sharing your testimony?

PRAY: Pray that God would help each of you grow in confidence when communicating the powerful message of the Good News with others.

ACTIVATE: Think about the Good News of Jesus in your own life this week. What has He done that's good in your life? What do you want others to know about what Jesus has done in your life? Write your thoughts in your journal.



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